

What Was in the Overcoat.

It was during the late war, and immediately after one of those sharp, hotly-contested skirmishes which are so apt to befall the flanks, or outposts, of big, opposing armies. Having been mostly a cavalry scrimmage, there were an unusual number of bad-looking wounds as compared with the number of deaths. As soon as the fight was over, the wounded were borne from the field, and a hospital improvised in an old barn, which offered plenty of room, though not much protection from the weather.

Among the wounded was Corporal Silas Timms, one of the very bravest and best-looked of our men. A bullet had shattered one of the bones of the leg, between the knee and the ankle, but he had managed, with the aid of two muskets for crutches, to make his own way to the barn. When there, however, the effort told upon him so severely that he fainted dead away, and was lifted by some of his comrades to a grain-chest which chanced to stand near.

Not long before this event a squad of assistant surgeons, fresh from the medical schools, had joined the army, and two of these "young gentlemen," in search of information, fell upon poor Silas. They found the bullet-hole in the leg, and quickly determined that a bone had been broken.

"Say, Tom," said one to the other, "here's just our opportunity. Now we'll determine about the bifurcation of that popliteal artery, and see whether there are more than two branches."

Sawbones Number Two jumped at the chance, and a case of new and untried instruments was opened.

One of the lieutenants of Silas's company was in the barn, and near enough to hear the remarks of the fledglings, and to see their ghastly preparations. He didn't believe there was any need of cutting that leg off. And, mercy! the butchers were going to cut the leg off above the knee. Aye—they meant to have the whole popliteal space for examination. The lieutenant indignantly interfered. He protested against any amputation at all until the regimental surgeon could be consulted.

The young surgeons had learned the privileges of their position. They turned upon the presumptuous lieutenant toweringly. They would have him kicked out from the barn if he did not take himself off out of the way. They were able to take care of their own affairs. And they proceeded to strip the wounded leg.

Ordinarily the lieutenant would have planted his fist in the face of such a heartless fellow, under such provocation, but just now his wish was to save the poor corporal's leg, and, most likely, his life. And he started off eagerly inquiring for the surgeon.

At this point a man stopped him—an elderly man, wearing the overcoat and cap of a hospital steward—and asked what was the matter. The lieutenant told him.

"Come and show me," said he. And the two went together to the grain-chest, where the would-be amputators were trying to asphyxiate their victim with chloroform, and he, just returned to consciousness, struggling for dear life.

"Hallo! gentlemen, what is all this?" The high and mighty twain turned and beheld, as they supposed, an antiquated hospital steward, probably of the regular army. They did not stop to consider that another man, suddenly called from his rest, might have thrown on the first overgarments that came to hand. They looked at the presumptuous mortal with ineffable contempt, and the spokesman was selecting the words with which he should reply, when a loud voice at the entrance of the barn cried out:

"Is the Surgeon-General here?" "Aye—what is it?" replied the man in the steward's overcoat.

"Ah, General, Doctor Rowe would like to see you at the house just over the way. Colonel Bangs is badly—"

"All right. I'll be there in a few moments. Now, young gentlemen, what is the trouble here?"

We need hardly tell how those two youthful experimenters "went back into their boots." Suffice it to say that Silas Timms is living to-day, the owner of two good legs; and he knows that he owes the blessing to his devoted lieutenant, and to the elderly gentleman in the hospital steward's overcoat.—S. C. Jr., in New York Ledger.

DANIEL WEBSTER gave a reception to some Western lawyers one evening, shortly after the succession of President Tyler and the dissolution of President Harrison's Cabinet. Among those present were Mr. Stanbery, late Attorney-General, and a bashful gentleman by the name of Leonard. They were presented, made their compliments to their host and hostess, and Leonard, to get out of harm's way, made for one of those nonsensical little gilt and satin chairs which are not made to be sat in, but which adorn all drawing-rooms. To make things dead sure, Leonard tilted his chair backward, and down it went, smashed, cracking in a crowded drawing-room, and, of course, Leonard the unfortunate was also Leonard the observed. Webster rushed to the wreck of the "Buckeye," extended both hands to him, and hauling him up, said: "Why, Mr. Leonard, you ought to know that no cabinet-work will hold together here." There was a general laugh, and Leonard did not again try satin chairs that were not made to be sat in.

NEW ORLEANS is built upon a forest of cypress trees. For 600 feet down this is the foundation! Rows upon rows of the stumps of the cypress are found growing over each other superimposed, each of which layers it is calculated has required a thousand years to form!

Concerning Duels.

In the time of Henry III., in a single province of France, 220 gentlemen were killed in duels in six months. In the reign of Henry Quarte, 4,000 were killed in two years. In those days seconds as well as principals engaged in the quarrel. The good King granted over 14,000 pardons for quarrels alone. From the beginning of the reign of George III. to 1840 upwards of 200 leading duels took place in England, including 400 principals and as many seconds. In three of them both combatants were killed; in the others, about 80 killed, 120 wounded, one-half of whom desperately, the other half slightly; the rest escaped unhurt. It is estimated that one's chance of life in a duel is one in five, and one-half, more or less, are severely wounded. Twenty trials occurred; some were found guilty of manslaughter, four of murder, two were hanged, the rest imprisoned.

The world has been ever full of men ready to fight for a fancied grievance at the drop of a hat; or if they had no cause, then to make one. The nobleman who fought fourteen duels to prove that Dante was a greater poet than Aristo, and on his death-bed admitted that he had never read either, was no more cracked-brain than one of Washington's aids, who fought a general second in rank in the revolutionary war to prove that Washington was equal to the official position he held, and that, as a private gentleman, he was entitled to consideration and respect.

Some gossiping babblers once told La Fontaine, the fabulist, that a certain captain was too intimate with his wife, and that he must fight him. Bucking on his sword he encountered the officer, told him his object, and announced his intention of fighting him. The officer disarmed the poet, and, assuring him of the ridiculousness and falsehood of the rumors, said if he was the cause of so much trouble he would come to his house no more. The officer's conduct so pleased La Fontaine that he immediately declared that come he must, and if he did not he surely would fight him. Cagliostro, the quack and charlatan of Louis XV's time, was challenged by a physician. The renowned professor of legerdemain proposed that, it being a medical duel, it be settled medically; that the parties swallow two pills, one poisonous, the other innocuous. It is needless to say the duel was off.

Marquis De Teutaniac, from Brittany, once challenged the whole pit of a theatre. Stepping from behind one of the shovesceens of the stage he shouted out something which he pit hissed. Advancing to the footlights, in the full gaze of the audience, he said: "Ladies and gentlemen, with your permission a piece will be performed to-morrow, 'The Insolence of the Pit Criticised,' by Marquis De Teutaniac, in as many acts as may be desired." No one responding, the crack-brained duelist was removed.

Prince Delgoroucki challenged an old Russian general named Zass, and at the same moment the Swedish artillery was heard, and news came that the enemy were attacking a redoubt. The two at once engage in their duel by standing in their embrasure till one or the other was struck. The Prince was cut in two by a cannon ball, and the general made a masterly retreat. Count De Tolstoy and a naval captain fought. The latter insisted on a naval duel, and proposed that they seize each other and jump into the water. The Count said he could not swim; the captain charged him with cowardice, and rudely seizing him, jumped into the sea. Both were rescued, but the captain's injuries were so severe that he died a few days after.

Perhaps the most ridiculous story is that told of General Putnam of revolutionary wolf-fame, known as "Old Put." During the French war he was challenged by an English officer. He proposed that each sit on a keg of powder, into the bung of which was lighted a fuse. After the fuse got well under way, and the flame was uncomfortably near the hole, the officer ran. "Hold on, my friend; it's only onion-seed!" Gentlemen of the cloth have not always been slow to resent injuries. De Retz doffed his cowl and priestly robes, and showed himself master of the fence and thrust as often as occasion required.

PURIFIED LOVE.—All men and women must love something. If our thoughts are pure we love birds, flowers, and all beautiful things. In their contemplation we are happy, and there comes to our brain a steady strength. It is such a rest from labor to look upon the fragrant flowers placed each morning on our desk—to hear our pet canary sing his roundelay of welcome—to behold evidences of thrift and neatness all about, as these children of order and system reward the senses. It is related of a man that he called his wife, who was a hundred pounds heavier than he, his little darling—his petite pet. People smiled at him because they did not understand his situations. He held a warm, trusting, loving heart, a great, manly love all about the object of that love, and so she was his little pet—his darling. We are like chameleons, and color as we feed mentally. If we love the beautiful, we are happy. If we love the coarse, the vulgar, the objects or influences that give no sweet return, life becomes a blank, the soul cracks and shrinks into a bundle of nailrods to lacerate the mental man, and we are on the direct road to ruin. What a beautiful world this would be, if all persons would only ornament their homes and their hearts by cultivating and keeping alive their love for pets, no matter what their form or condition!

TEXAS grows worse and worse. Three years from now it expects to have twenty Congressmen.

Adornment.

"It was one of those pretty houses, surrounded by shrubbery and flowers, about which almost every passer remarked, 'Oh! how I should like to live in that pretty house!' Such is the description of a house we have in our mind's eye, and it could be true of almost every farm-house in the land, did the occupants only will it so. A few flowers, a little grass and a few shrubs, all well cared for at a trifling expense of money or labor, and the thing is done. A little care each day would keep everything neat and in order, and a little thought each week would regulate that care to the best advantage. We do not live in this world for ourselves alone; but for the whole world. Upon this principle, we know a woman who always keeps a light in the front rooms of her house every winter night because, as she says, "we not only have the warm glow of it ourselves, but to every passer-by it gives out a cheerful message which produces in his imagination a picture of comfort and happiness within. So it is with the adornments around the house. They not only give enjoyment to their possessors, but to everyone who passes they send a message of thrift, refinement, and happiness, which should alone be sufficient compensation for the little labor and expense they may cost.

We remember once passing through a little village in which almost every house was surrounded with flowers, shrubs and vines, and which left upon our mind an ineffable impression. Though nearly twenty years have passed since then, we still think of it frequently with pleasure. Could the occupants of those pretty village places only know of this, they will doubtless feel amply repaid for all their trouble. In all your calculations on the profits of your crops, by all means fail not to include your crop of household adornments. The profits on your grain may be lasting, probably will not; but the profits on your pure, God-given pleasures, though not counted in dollars and cents, can never vanish.


ADVICE TO OFFICE SEEKERS.—The other day I heard a cabinet minister talking to a young man who wanted a place. "My young friend," said he, "don't apply. Saw wood, drive cows, anything honorable, but preserve your independence. I have a man in my department who has been in forty years." "Forty years?" "Yes, every day of it. He came in 1836. Well, he gets about the same salary he had to commence with. The other day he came to me, saying: 'I ought to have died forty years ago.' 'You don't mean that,' I said. 'Yes,' said he, 'I mean that. I have been buried in this building forty years, and I had just as well been buried in the grave. What's the difference between tombs? Of what advantage have I been to myself in here? I had nothing when I came in, and have got nothing now. I am disqualified for anything. If I was turned out to day, I would starve to-morrow.'" So much for government position that young men are so anxious to get. They had better let it alone.—Cincinnati Commercial.

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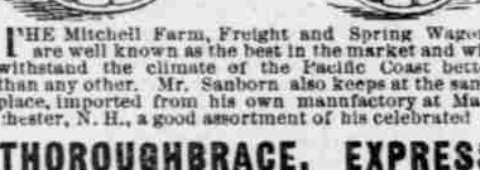
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